

Catawba County Emergency Medical Services Standard Operating Guidelines

Violence in the Workplace

Many people make the mistake of believing that workplace violence happens when a person “loses it” or “just snaps.” However, this usually isn’t the case. There are distinct behaviors and signs that lead up to an incidence of workplace violence. In fact, it’s been estimated that warning signals are evident in as many as two-thirds of these cases.

There are indicators that place an individual at an increased risk for violent behavior. Through analysis of past incidences of workplace violence, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has defined these indicators to include:

- Direct or veiled threats of harm.
- Intimidating, belligerent, harassing, bullying, or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior.
- Numerous conflicts with supervisors and other employees.
- Inappropriate references to guns, or fascination with weapons.
- Fascination with incidents of workplace violence, statements indicating approval of the use of violence to resolve a problem, or statements indicating identification with perpetrators of workplace homicides.
- Statements indicating desperation (over family, financial, and other personal problems) to the point of contemplating suicide.
- Drug/alcohol abuse.
- Extreme changes in behavior.

Each of these indicators is a clear sign that something is wrong. If you notice a co-worker displaying any of these behaviors, it is critical that you report it to your manager or the proper authorities. If you’re concerned with confidentiality, try sending an anonymous letter.

Catawba County EMS has a zero tolerance for violence in the workplace and encourages prevention. If any disruptive or potentially violent behavior is observed it should be reported immediately to the on-duty Crew Chief or Supervisor or contact law enforcement.

4/7/06 – BDB